

# **Migrant Entrepreneurship in Spain: A Systematic Review**

## **Emprendimiento inmigrante en España: una revisión sistemática**

**María Vitores<sup>1</sup>, Mercedes Fernández<sup>1</sup>, Raquel Caro<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Instituto Universitario de Estudios sobre Migraciones, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, España

<sup>2</sup> Escuela Técnica Superior de Ingeniería-ICAI, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid, España

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*Correspondencia: Mercedes Fernández García. Instituto Universitario de Estudios sobre Migraciones. Universidad Pontificia Comillas. c/ Alberto Aguilera, 23, 28015, Madrid, España. E-mail: [mercedes@comillas.edu](mailto:mercedes@comillas.edu)*

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Spain became an immigrant receiving country in the mid-nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when foreign workers started arriving, attracted by the booming market for unskilled labour. They traditionally entered the secondary market as employees, showing a self-employment rate lower than that of natives. However, during the economic downturn, ethnic businesses significantly increased, adopting new strategies and proving the resilience of immigrant entrepreneurs.

**Method:** This paper aims to gather peer-reviewed literature to investigate migrant entrepreneurship in Spain, and its implications in immigrant's performance in the labour market. Thirty-nine papers met the criteria.

**Results:** Results show that migrant entrepreneurs: (1) respond to necessity and opportunity (2) are mainly focused on open market, rather than on ethnic business; (3) seek support in transnational practices.

**Discussion and/or Conclusion:** Our analysis shows that Spanish migrant entrepreneurs' behavior is not fully fitting into the classical theoretical frameworks and that in general there is a certain overlapping or a new model arising. In fact, the crisis has brought changes to ethnic minority businesses and their vulnerability with higher turnover. But it also has brought opportunities, innovation, new niches, transnational focus, and certain ease in access to property.

**Keywords:** Migrant economy, Ethnic Economy, Immigrant entrepreneurs, Systematic Review, Spain.

## Resumen

**Introducción:** España se convirtió en un país receptor de inmigrantes económicos en los años 90 del pasado siglo. Los trabajadores extranjeros atraídos por la bonanza económica del país, accedían como asalariados al mercado de trabajo, presentando una tasa de autoempleo inferior a la de los españoles. La crisis económica incrementó los negocios de inmigrantes, motivando la adopción de nuevas estrategias y confirmando la resiliencia de estos empresarios.

**Método:** Este trabajo ofrece una revisión sistemática de la literatura sobre economía étnica en España, mediante el análisis de treinta y nueve artículos.

**Resultados:** Los resultados muestran que los empresarios étnicos: (1) responden a dos perfiles, necesidad y oportunidad; (2) regentan negocios más orientados al mercado abierto que al nicho étnico; (3) se apoyan grandemente en prácticas transnacionales.

**Discusión y/o Conclusión:** Nuestro análisis muestra que el comportamiento de los empresarios inmigrantes en España no se ajusta completamente a los marcos teóricos clásicos y que, en general, existe una cierta superposición o incluso podría estar surgiendo un nuevo modelo. De hecho, la crisis ha traído cambios a las empresas de los inmigrantes, incrementando su vulnerabilidad y generando una mayor rotación. Pero también ha traído oportunidades, innovación, nuevos nichos, enfoque transnacional y ha aumentado la facilidad de acceso a la propiedad.

**Palabras Clave:** Migrante económico, Economía étnica, Empresarios inmigrantes, Revisión sistemática, España.

## 1. Introduction

Until 1986, immigration into Spain was limited. The foreigners in the country were mostly of European origin and the majority did not match the profile of economic migrants. The nineties brought an inflow of economic migrants of a more diverse origin, who were attracted by the booming market for unskilled labour (Cachón Rodríguez, 2002). Foreign population grew from 2% in 1998 to 12% in 2013. The flow of new immigrants continued in response to the still active ‘calling effect’, despite the worsening employment opportunities for migrants as the economy contracted at the end 2008 and in 2009 (Oliver Alonso, 2011; 2012).

The economic crisis brought structural changes in the immigrant labour market: the average age increased; female unemployment grew more slowly compared to males; employment moved towards the service sector; and ethnic minority self-employment increased ethnic minority entrepreneurship (Oliver Alonso, 2013). The massive destruction of jobs in the construction and industry sectors reshaped the immigration labour market towards the services sector, with higher concentration of women and older workers. At the same time, the drop in the share of salaried among the immigrants was buffered by an increase in self-employment. For example, self-employment grew at 3.7% in 2012.

Historically, self-employment rate among immigrants in Spain has been 50% lower than that of natives (9% against 18% in 2008), but it grew rapidly during the crisis. In 2015, the difference was only 2 points (14% compared to 16% for the natives). This pattern of migrant entrepreneurship in Spain is similar to the patterns observed in other immigrant-receiving countries: in Germany, self-employment rates are lower among immigrants (Constant et al., 2007; Constant & Zimmermann, 2006) and within the EU and OECD immigrant entrepreneurship increased dramatically during economic downturns (Arrighetti et al., 2014).

This paper aims to examine peer-reviewed literature to understand the migrant businesses economy in Spain and its implications for immigrants’ performance in the labour market. First, the main theoretical developments related to migrant economy are reviewed. The second section covers methodological issues, inclusion criteria and search procedures. In the third section, the main results of the review are grouped into four categories: general data, methodological approaches, theoretical frameworks and

transversal topics. The final section offers a set of conclusions and suggestions for further lines of research.

## 2. Theoretical background

The study of ethnic economy and entrepreneurship originated in America during the seventies to investigate the high rates of self-employment and entrepreneurship among specific immigrant communities led to the development of well-established theories, presented chronologically in this section.

The *culturalist theory* was coined by Bonacich (1973) based on the concept of the ‘middleman theory’. In her view, some immigrant groups are especially prone to self-employment due to their cultural characteristics and their response to blocked opportunities in labour markets. So, they turn towards marginal sectors or ethnic niches generating middleman minorities.

Their survival is based on ethnic solidarity, rooted in trust and cooperation within the group. This support mechanism allows a more efficient use of resources, generates co-ethnic employment, and provides protection of their economic activities by regulation of internal competition through associative movements or establishment of guilds.

The ethnic economy can thrive due to the specific use of two types of resources (Light & Gold, 2000): ethnic and class. The ethnic resources are derived from social capital linked to ethnic networks that provide access to financial resources (informal), information and advice, low cost co-ethnic labour, and other assets connected to group tradition and experience. The class resources are acquired through family, environment, and education comprising of property and wealth, and cultural capital. The relative access to the two forms of resources will determine the type of entrepreneurship.

Both types of resources play a key role in the ethnic economy by providing the necessary inflows in the form of social, human and financial capital, setting the frame for intra-group relationships, trust and solidarity.

The *Ethnic enclave* approach is an alternative proposed by Wilson and Portes (1980) and later by Portes and Manning (2013), based on their study of the thriving economy of the Cuban diaspora in Miami. At the core of the ethnic enclave are the co-ethnicity, namely the presence of ethnic owned small and competitive enterprises that hire

co-ethnic workers and the spatial concentration of such businesses (Portes & Jensen, 1989). Additional elements that play a role are ethnic trust, solidarity and reciprocity.

The geographical concentration and high density of the ethnic group create a growing sub-economy with gradual vertical and horizontal expansion of the entrepreneurial tissue, generating a dynamic labour market that provides opportunities for employment and upward mobility. Moreover, in the ethnic enclave, the workers employed by their co-ethnic entrepreneurs enjoy conditions similar to those employed outside the enclave, including avenues for economic mobility (Portes & Jensen, 1989).

However, other studies cast doubts on the “equal” conditions including earnings offered in ethnic enclaves (Aguilera, 2009; Sanders & Nee, 1987). Edin et al. (2003) also question the advantage and impact of the enclave for those at the low end of the salary level. Likewise, criticised are the role of ethnic solidarity and the reciprocity between employers and co-ethnic workers (Kim, 1999; Light et al., 1994; Sanders & Nee, 1987; Toussaint-Comeau, 2008).

*Ecological succession* is grounded in the work of the Chicago School of Sociology. Park (1936) documents the residential succession patterns within the city and how migrants settle in. Aldrich (1975) establishes the premises under which the process begins. An urban area becomes a target when the group living in it no longer replaces itself. This occurs mainly because of the upward mobility of the resident group, who move to better areas that match their new social position. This process leaves empty space that provides opportunities for a new group to move in following this vacancy chain.

In the *interactive theory* (Waldinger et al., 1985) building pillars of ethnic strategies are the opportunity structure, and the group characteristics. The opportunity structure refers to the market conditions (ethnic market or open market) and the access to ownership. The group characteristics are the predisposing factors that include human and cultural capital among others and resource mobilisation of mainly ethnic network and ethnic capital.

The ethnic strategies represent the hinges on which the opportunity structure and the group characteristics rotate to overcome problems and hurdles given the environment. Typically, the ethnic entrepreneur needs to address problems related to acquisition of skills, recruitment of reliable and cheap labour, relationship with costumers, competition and low conducive political environment.

The *mixed embeddedness theory* is the only approach developed in Europe. As Jones and Ram (2007) explain, it acknowledges the early contribution of Granovetter (1985) to the concept of embeddedness. Businesses operate within political and economic structures and social networks critical to access resources. Mixed embeddedness theory was developed by Kloosterman and Rath (2001) and further refined by Kloosterman (2010) who brings attention to demand and supply sides of the ethnic minority business.

The demand side is partially represented by the opportunity structure already considered by Waldinger. Because of greater prominence of regulation in Europe compared to the United States, the European scholars pay attention to an additional aspect of macro level environment.

The insertion and the upward social mobility of ethnic entrepreneurship are reflected in two dimensions of the opportunity structure: market accessibility and market growth potential, both embedded within the political-economic environment of the market and the legal structure that regulates it.

The combination of all those factors lead to three models of embeddedness: American, Rhineland and Nordic. In the first one motivation is anchored in opportunities whereas in the other two necessity drives the impulse of entrepreneurship.

The supply side are the immigrant entrepreneurs who are traditionally confined to low growth and marginal sectors with few entry barriers in terms of financing and skills. Such barriers could be overcome by turning to their social networks. However, super-diversity of recent immigrants (Vertovec, 2007) the supply side has a new set of entrepreneurs with different levels of human capital capable of generating new types of immigrant enterprises.

Kloosterman identifies three types of markets based on the level of human capital required and the market growth potential: Vacancy-chain openings (low skilled immigrants and low growth potential, vg. old businesses vacated by the original owners that survive through implementing informal economy practices); Post-industrial/highly skilled (High human capital threshold and high growth potential, vg., IT and consultancy businesses); and Post-industrial/low skilled (little human capital and high growth potential, vg. personal services such as day care for children and elderly, house cleaning and other support low-

end services). Migrant businesses have a new divide in the post-industrial market between the cognitive cultural and the servile activities (Kloosterman et al., 2016).

Mixed embeddedness has led to a solid body of research on migrant economy in Europe which offers avenues to explore, for instance, informality (Ram et al., 2017) and social impact of new migrant entrepreneurs (Jones et al., 2019).

Ram et al. (2017) have enriched the mixed embeddedness approach to provide a framework to examine racist exclusion that brings specific hurdles to those entrepreneurs that are not found in mainstream businesses (Jones et al., 2014), the role of gender within migrants' business and family structure (Villares-Varela, 2016, 2018), market and capital interplay and role of social agency in their survival strategies (Villares-Varela et al., 2018), and historical context.

An alternative theoretical approach is explored by Ram et al. (2015) in their analysis of the migrant economy through the lenses of critical realism, which yields valuable outcomes together with greater integration of research and engagement of social actors for significant policy influence.

Finally, *transnationalism* has also been a part of the studies of migrant economy with significant qualitative research on specific communities (Itzigsohn et al., 1999; Kyle, 1999; Landolt et al., 1999). Portes et al. (2002) provided a comprehensive conceptual account of transnationalism in migrant entrepreneurship. They suggest that transnational migrant entrepreneurship is related among others to income level, integration level, social networks as well as the socio-political conditions of the country of origin, and characteristics of the community.

### **3. Method**

Spain has a short history of economic immigration and so does the study of migrant economy. The literature of economic migration in Spain was initially focused on their integration in the mainstream labour market (Solé & Parella, 2005).

Hence, this paper aims to review peer-reviewed literature to examine migrant entrepreneurship in Spain and its implications for immigrants' performance in the labour market. We review the literature developed in Spain and about Spain to understand how the



research community has addressed migrant economy and entrepreneurship, and what findings have influenced how it is done.

Systematic review procedures are geared to limit biases (Petticrew & Roberts 2006). To achieve this, detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria are established to provide a transparent set of criteria for research works to be included in this review. Also provided are detailed description of the search procedures and its results.

### *3.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

This systematic review considers several criteria that the research works need to comply with to be included.

- The main inclusion criterion is the focus on migrant economy. This comprises of the concept of migrant ownership economy of Light and Gold (2000) which includes the immigrant business owners, co-ethnic workers and their families engaged in the businesses. But also, it considers as well all the workforce linked to those businesses independently of their ethnicity. Migrant economy refers to all the activities and processes around the ethnic minority businesses.
- Research works focus on migrant businesses in Spain at a national or local level.
- Works focused on immigrants, independently of the country of origin. This can be research papers with a general perspective including all or several groups or a narrower focus considering just one ethnic community.
- Only papers published in journals and submitted to a peer review are included<sup>1</sup>. This condition allows to assume some quality assurance.
- All type of methodologies, quantitative, qualitative as well as mixed, are represented.
- Theoretical papers as well as other literature reviews are included, provided the review focuses on Spain.
- Papers included must be published in English and Spanish, any work in other language is excluded.

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<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this revision has left out significant published work such as *El empresariado étnico* (Beltrán et al., 2006), *Musulmanes en Barcelona: espacios y dinámicas comunitarias* (Moreras, 1999), *Negocios étnicos: los comercios de los inmigrantes no comunitarios en Cataluña* (Parella & Solé, 2005) and *El empresariado inmigrante en España* (Solé et al., 2007).

- Migrant economy is a complex reality that can be analysed from many different angles resulting in a multidisciplinary phenomenon. For this reason, works that look at aspects such as gender, community interactions, use of social space and any other relevant social element are included.
- Finally, the papers included are available electronically.

### *3.2 Search procedures*

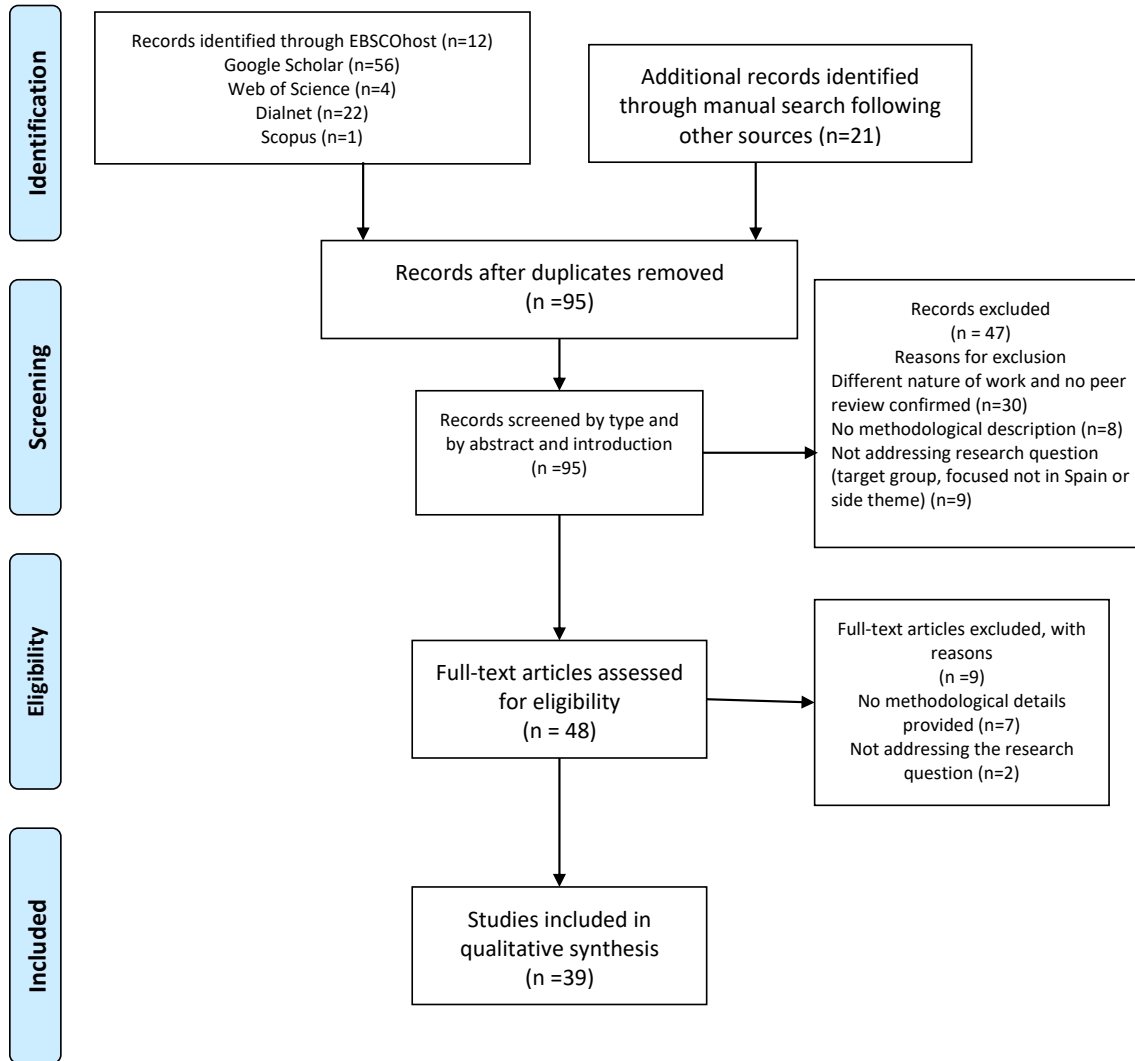
The search was conducted on several databases, EBSCO, Dialnet, Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar as well as manual search procedures.

The search was based on the combination of terms in English and Spanish like: entrepreneur\*, entrepreneurship, business, negocio, empresa\*, empresario together with Booleans such as AND as well as OR to pair with ethnic, immigrant, Spain, Spanish and some particular major locations such as Madrid, Barcelona, Andalusia, Valencia.

The search yielded a total of hundred and sixteen publications. After removing repetitions, the final number was reduced to ninety-five. The first iteration consisted of checking on whether the papers were peer reviewed and reading the abstract and introductions (in the event the abstract was missing) to ensure that each paper complied with objective of this review. As a result, another forty-seven publications were discarded; it left forty-eight research works that went through the second step in which the full text was assessed.

The second iteration discarded another nine papers due to the lack of complete description of the methodological approach, and to a lesser extent, for not being relevant for study. The final number of papers included in the review was thirty-nine.

The Figure 1 shows information on the selection process following the PRISMA flow diagram.



**Figure 1. PRISMA Flow diagram for selection of articles**

Source: The PRISMA Group (2009)

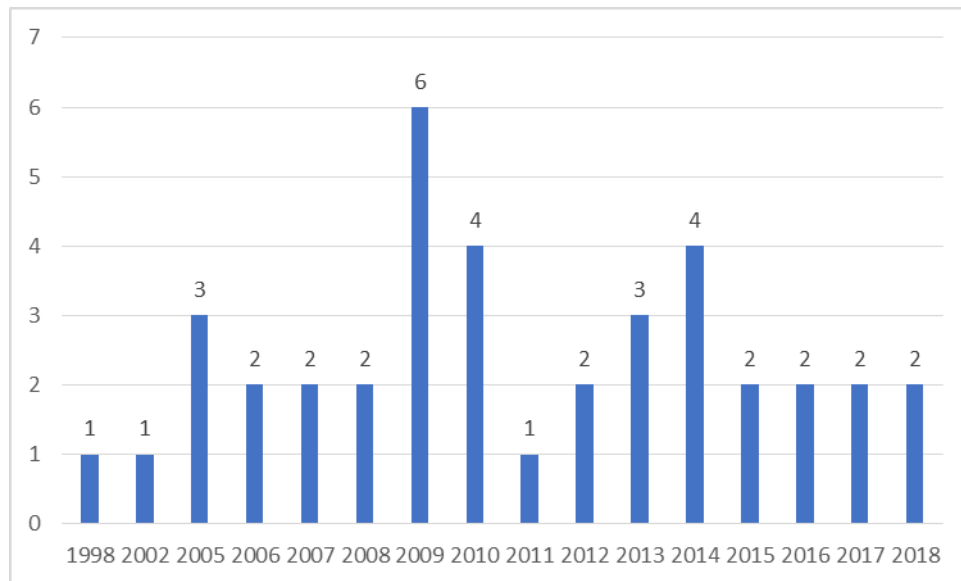
#### 4. Results

To proceed with analysis, all the papers (Annex 1) were read and information relating to year of publication, journal, location of the study, target population, methodological approach, main findings and theoretical framework were recorded in Excel. The objective of such detailed analysis was to systematically identify main topics and categorize them. The results are presented in the following order:

- General data covering the frequency of publication, main journals and geographical locations focused by the papers included in the review
- Methodological approaches
- Theoretical frameworks and transversal topics employed by papers and the main findings

#### 4.1 General data: year, journals, locations, groups

The publication trends do not follow a steady pattern as shown in Figure 2. However, since 1998, the year of the first publication, interest in migrant economy has grown. Two main cycles materialise: The first lasts until 2010, with a peak in 2009, which focuses on migrant entrepreneurship as part of a new phenomenon that appears in Spain with a bias towards growth and development of migrant economy during the economic expansion of Spain. The second, starting in 2011 just after the crisis, with a peak in 2014, focuses on the impact of the crisis and resilience strategies.



**Figure 2. Frequency of publications**

Source: Own elaboration

Regarding the publications, the list of journals included in Table 1 illustrates the multidisciplinary character of the topic. This corroborates the findings of the systematic review of immigrant entrepreneurship literature carried out by Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013).

The list contains journals on sociology, geography, migration studies, women and gender studies, labour relations as well as rural development.

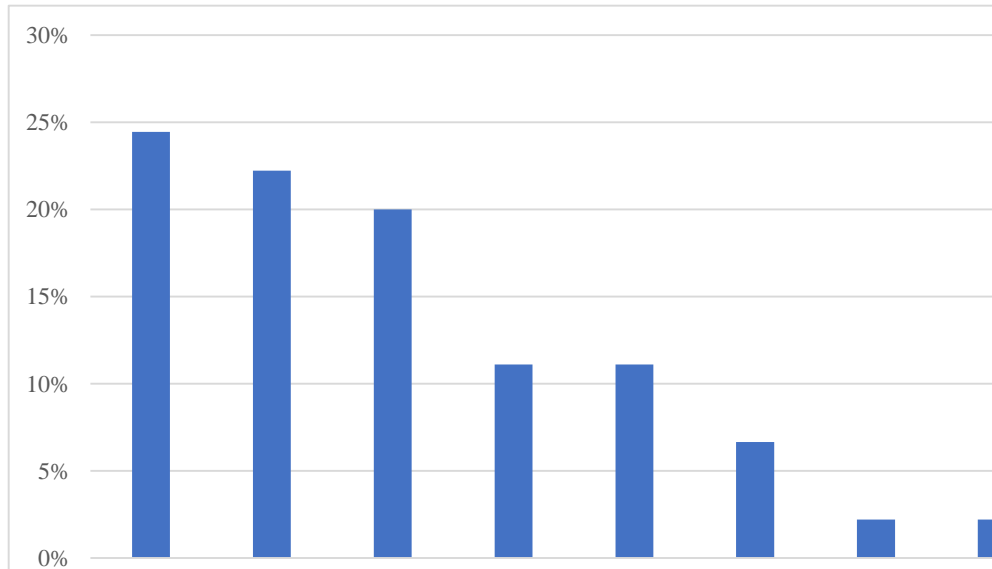
**Table 1. List of journals**

<b>Journal</b>	<b>Number of papers</b>
Ager: revista de estudios sobre despoblación y desarrollo rural	1
Anales de Geografía de la UCM	1
Cuadernos de Relaciones Laborales	1
Cuadernos Económicos del ICE	1
Economía agraria y recursos naturales	1
Estudios Geográficos	3
Ethnic and Racial Studies	1
Global Networks	1
Información Comercial Española	1
International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal	1
International journal of Anthropology and Ethnology	1
International Journal of Humanities and Social Science	1
International Journal of Iberian Studies	1
International Migration	1
Journal of organisational change management	1
Migraciones	3
Migraciones Internacionales	1
Política y Cultura	1
REDES Revista hispana para el análisis de redes sociales	1
REIS Revista Española de investigaciones sociológicas	1
Revista CIDOB d' Afers Internationals (Including the Annuary)	3
Revista CLAD reforma y democracia	1
Revista de Empresa Familiar	1
Revista del Ministerio de Trabajo e Inmigración	1
Revista Galega de Economía	1
Revista Internacional de Organizaciones (RIO)	3
Sociología del trabajo	1
South Asian Diaspora	1
Transformations in Business and economics	1
Women's Studies International Forum	1
Zainak	1

Source: Own elaboration

The research usually covers ethnic economies in cities or in a series of locations in one or more provinces. There is concentration in the regions of Catalonia and Madrid, accounting for 44% of the research papers included. At the city level, concentration is in

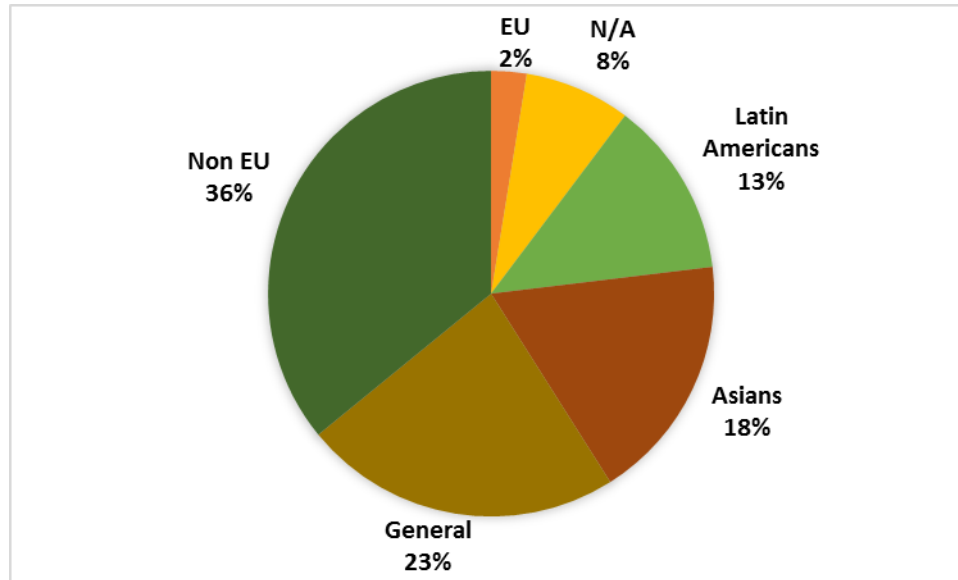
Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia. The national level represents 22% of all the research work as shown in Figure 3. This can be explained by the dominance of qualitative research that leads to concentration in a specific area of a city or province. The sample often originates in the mapping of businesses belonging to a foreigner.



**Figure 3. Locations (in percentages)**

Source: Own elaboration

By target groups, as shown in Figure 4, Asians -including specific work on Chinese and Pakistanis- are the most popular category. Latin-Americans take the third place. ‘General’ category includes research on entrepreneurs who are not born in Spain as a criterion for defining the target group. The largest category targeted is the non-EU entrepreneurs followed by the general immigrants, with a focus on low income and developing countries.



**Figure 4. Target groups (in percentages)**

Source: Own elaboration

The main conclusions of the general data analysis are: the highlight of multidisciplinary nature of the topic; the concentration on specific locations rather than national coverage; and the focus on extended migrant groups (general and non-EU). In terms of publication date, two main phases can be observed prior to crisis and crisis years and beginning of recovery.

#### 4.2 Methodologies used

The methodologies used in the papers analysed are shown in Table 2. They have been categorised as quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and reviews.

**Table 2. Methodologies used**

	Frequency	Percentage
Qualitative	21	54%
Quantitative	9	23%
Mixed	8	21%
Review	1	3%
Total	39	100%

Source: Own elaboration

The majority of the research on immigrant entrepreneurs in Spain has followed a qualitative approach representing 57% of the papers included. As already mentioned, this contributes to explain the local focus of most researches conducted. The tools and techniques most utilised according to the methodology are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Instruments and analytical tools**

<b>Quantitative</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>
Descriptive analyses	In depth interviews
Regressions	Mapping
Association tests	Direct and participant observation
Structural equation models	Group discussions
	Case studies

Source: Own elaboration

Statistical information on immigrant businesses used by the studies comes mainly from three sources: The Registry of the Social Security as self-employed in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security; the Registry of Economic Activities; and the GEM (Global entrepreneurship Monitoring)<sup>2</sup>. Other sources are the Labour Force Survey and the Residents Registry Census data in the National Statistics Institute.

The sample size on the qualitative studies ranges from 6 to 210. This includes the mixed methodology because all of them use statistical data for descriptive analysis or a self-generated questionnaire to produce the qualitative results. This wide gap reflects the diversity of tools used.

The quantitative studies work with self-generated data collected using specifically designed questionnaires. Sample sizes range from 214 to 364 cases. Only two papers (Martínez, 2008; Muñoz Bullón, 2014) use larger official and well established databases to provide descriptive analysis of ethnic entrepreneurs.

Throughout the papers included in this review, migrant economy has been analysed based on personal attributes mainly age, country of origin, gender, years of residence in Spain and family status.

<sup>2</sup> Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) is an annual assessment of the entrepreneurship activity level in a given country focusing on entrepreneurship behaviour, attitudes and motivations and its impact at national level. It also looks at the policy, regulatory and institutional framework. The GEM provides data for 54 countries.

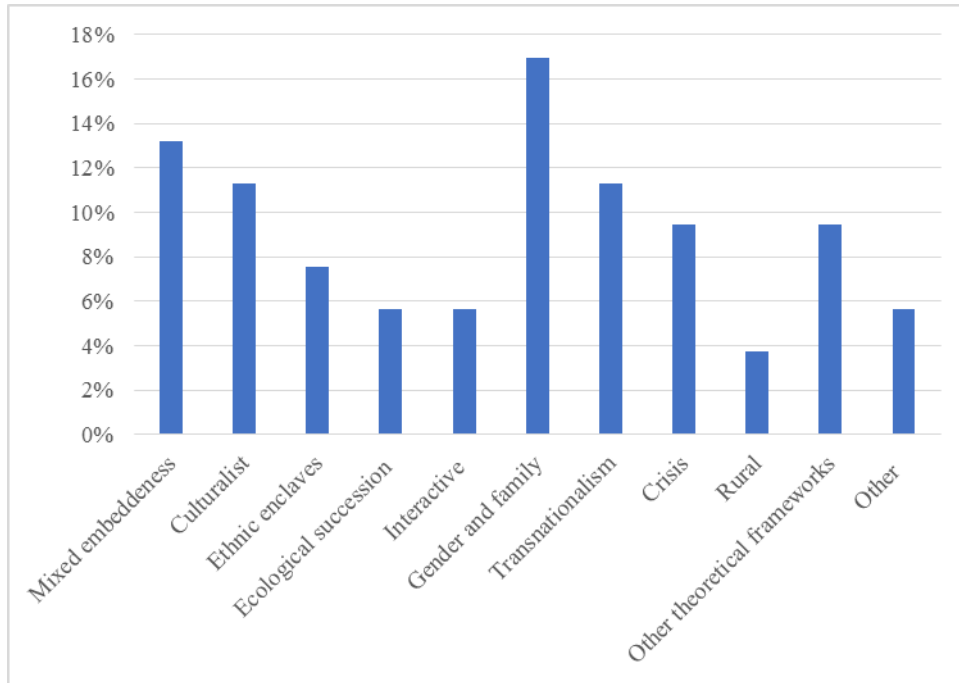


Human capital has been assessed as educational attainment and previous experience. Social networks and access to resources are the variables that underline social capital. Cultural capital is presented by predisposing factors related to previous family experience.

Finally, the business variables comprise sector of activity, age of business, workforce and locations. Business strategies, such as transnational endeavours, business nature -whether ethnic or open market- and motivating factors - opportunity versus necessity- are also included.

#### *4.3 Theoretical framework/Analysis approach*

This section classifies the research papers based on the theoretical framework in which they are embedded. This part is not exempted of difficulty because most papers employ several aspects of different theories. For this reason, the predominance of a specific theory or approach is used to categorize papers. In some cases, papers fall into more than one category. Indeed, some of them follow the classic theories presented in the introduction: culturalist, ecological succession, interactive and mixed embeddedness. Others, stress more additional variables of the multidisciplinary nature of migrant economy such as gender, transnationalism, rural migrant entrepreneurship or impact of the economic crisis, showing the dominance of a particular framework. The authors felt it was necessary to have a mixed categorisation combining both. Figure 5 provides the percentages for each category.



**Figure 5. Theoretical frameworks/ analysis approaches of the articles (multiple selection considered)**

Source: Own elaboration

This section first analyses the research focused on the classical theories followed by those papers looking into more transversal characteristics like gender, transnationalism or crisis impact.

- *Classical ethnic economy theories research review*

*Mixed embeddedness* is the theoretical framework followed by most research works as a unique approach or in combination with others. The results throw light on two main directions, the type of businesses based on the postulates of Kloosterman (2010) and the adequacy of the mixed embeddedness models (American, Rhineland and Nordic) to the Spanish reality.

Güell (2016) uses the type of business classification in her analysis of the characteristics of the Pakistani entrepreneurs to conclude that their businesses fall into the vacancy-chain and low skilled post-industrial markets supported by a conducive institutional framework to start up a business, an adequate opportunity structure and a combination of strategies. It confirms the mixed embeddedness postulate of adopting self-

employment as necessity. Other researches have reached partially similar conclusions (Pardo & Varela 2009; Serra del Pozo, 2006) in the case of immigrant entrepreneurship in La Coruña and in Barcelona. However, Baltar and Icart (2013a) in her analysis of opportunity structure and attitudes of the Argentinian self-employed, observes that there is a high rate of their businesses in Spain falling into the high-skill post-industrial category. She also finds, a positive opinion of regulatory framework from most entrepreneurs. The decision of becoming entrepreneur is related to the potential to obtain higher income and not the necessity. In the same line, Parella (2005) notes that the field work done in Barcelona does not fully support Kloosterman's affirmation that in the European context self-employment is the only option for low qualified immigrants excluded from the labour market. On the contrary, Spain seems closer to the American model where self-employment is an interesting avenue for upward mobility. Finally, Pardo and Varela (2009) show how the institutional framework and the opportunity structure influence the type of entrepreneurial activity and therefore both necessity and opportunity driven migrant business are found in Galicia.

Serra del Pozo (2006) on the other hand, suggests that in Barcelona, both the European and the American model coexist. The first is represented by the Pakistanis, Bangladeshis and Moroccans who use self-employment as a survival tactic. The latter includes Indians and Chinese whose businesses are the manifestation of opportunities for moving forward socially and economically. Spanish scholars (Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos, 2006b, 2009) have produced a fourth model, more suitable to the case of Spain. This is the South European model characterised by high proportion of non-formal economy, high unemployment rate, and low quality of jobs available. Solé and Parella (2009) in their research in the main cities of Spain identified the existence of vacancy-chain type of businesses originated in blocked opportunities. This typology coexists with high skill post-industrial businesses resulting among other factors from the adequate framework in the host country.

The *interactive theory* is also used to analyse migrant economy characteristics in Spain. Research of the opportunity structure shows that in general the migratory and commercial laws are permissive, providing an option to access property and to find niches focusing on ethnic or immigrant clients as well as to the general market (Baltar & Brunet

Icart, 2013a; Valenzuela-García, 2010). However, in other cases like in Almeria (Arjona & Checa 2005, 2007; Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos, 2006b) the segmented market, restrictive policies to access property, and legal and administrative hurdles discourage self-employment confining it only to the ethnic market.

The group characteristics are defined based on predisposing factors as well as the role of the family and social status attached to entrepreneurship by some ethnic groups such as Pakistanis (Valenzuela-García, 2010) and the paramount importance of ethnic and social networks as a mean to start and sustain the business (Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos 2006b; Valenzuela-García, 2010).

Ethnic strategies confirm Waldinger's interactive theory with auto-exploitation, low salaries, sacrifices on expenses and relaying on the family involvement in the business. It also confirms the break-out findings of Ram and Hillin (1994) by trying to expand to the open market and implementing informal economy practices.

The *ecological succession and culturalist perspectives* are interlinked in the research work done in Spain and will therefore be merged in the review. The ecological succession is more prominent in those works that follow a geographical approach, generally resulting in an accurate mapping of the ethnic businesses in the area of study, highlighting the type of businesses and the settlement patterns.

The main avenue to establish migrant businesses is the vacancy-chain, with immigrants taking over neighbourhoods and family businesses closed as a result of the decay of the city centre and the impoverishment of those zones (García Ballesteros & Jiménez Blasco, 2012; Cebrián de Miguel & Bodega Fernández, 2002; Iglesias, 1998). This has resulted in the transformation of those neighbourhoods as immigrant residential enclaves and opened the opportunity to own those businesses targeting the immigrant community as well as the remaining inhabitants. This has contributed to the revitalisation of those decayed neighbourhoods. In Madrid, Cebrián de Miguel and Bodega Fernández (2002) and García Ballesteros and Jiménez Blasco (2012) corroborate the role of many migrant entrepreneurs as middlemen (Bonacich, 1973) by taking over old establishments closed to continue providing goods and services to the vicinity as well as to passers-by.

The culturalist theoretic framework highlights the importance of ethnic and class resources (Light & Gold, 2000). Those businesses do not require high financial nor human

capital and the entry barriers are low. The predisposing factors of some groups as part of the culturalist approach is confirmed in the case of Spain by Rueda Armengot et al. (2010) whose findings in the city of Valencia point to the relevance of the ethnic origin as main factor in the motivation, business activity and subsequent performance. Arjona Garrido and Checa Olmos (2005) in their research on migrant entrepreneurship in Almería provide a good example of the importance of social networks as part of the ethnic resources utilised and how class resources and mainly financial human and cultural capital support the development of immigrant businesses. Education as part of the human capital and its influence in the migrant enterprises and its performance has also been confirmed through research (Carbonell et al., 2014; Dinu et al., 2015).

In Spain *ethnic enclave economy* is at an early stage (Pardo & Varela, 2009; Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos, 2007; Parella, 2005) partially due to the fact that immigration is a recent reality and only residential enclaves for immigrants have appeared but not specifically for a single ethnic group. However, there is a dispersed pattern of ethnic businesses location which does not fulfil the main condition of their concentration as García Ballesteros and Jiménez Blasco (2012) point out in the case of Madrid. Only some few cases related to the Chinese and Indian community in Barcelona (Serra del Pozo, 2006) or as in the Lavapiés area of Madrid (Cebrián de Miguel & Bodega Fernández, 2002), found signs of ethnic enclave economies with a concentration of a certain typology of businesses that generate employment to co-ethnics independently of their residential location. Also for Pakistanis in Barcelona, Valenzuela-García (2010) sustains they have created an ethnic enclave allowing them to use their cultural resources more efficiently.

Valenzuela-García et al. (2017) on the contrary sustain that it is possible to talk of ethnic enclaves in Spain since the concept itself has been updated to adapt to the reality that globalisation brought and to play a pivotal role in the economic resilience during economic downturns.

- *Transversal focus research review*

The economic crisis has fostered a renewed interest in migrant-origin entrepreneurship and its impact in those businesses and in particular those among Asian ethnic groups such as Chinese, Pakistani and Indian. Partly anchored in the culturalist

theory and partly analysing the impact of the *economic crisis* in Spain on the ethnic businesses is the work of Beltrán Antolín and Saíz López (2015) about the Chinese community. Güell (2018) and Valenzuela-García et al. (2017) grounding their studies in mixed embeddedness and an upscaled ethnic enclave approach respectively explore the impact of the downturn on the Pakistani and Indian groups. Their self-employment rate is among the highest in Spain, and becoming an entrepreneur is largely the ultimate goal of most Asians. The crisis has not changed their motivations but in an endeavour to remain in business, they put in place resilience strategies such as opening of new niches, breaking out to open market, innovating in customer-friendly practices, strengthening the use of ethnic resources, widening the fluidity between formal and informal sector and intensifying the transnational practices that globalisation has brought as new opportunities. Cebrián de Miguel et al. (2016) also observe that in many cases the crisis has pushed them towards seeking open market clientele as a survival strategy together with self-exploitation and offer of wider range of services and products. High rotation rate of businesses and a contraction of number of migrant-origin businesses (Baltar & Icart, 2013b) is also a noticeable side effect of the economic crisis (Cebrián de Miguel et al. 2016; Muñoz Bullón, 2014).

However, the crisis also brought opportunities, in particular an improvement in the access to property with the drop of leasing and other costs and the decline of the traditional small commerce. This opens possibilities for immigrants to access low cost convenience stores through the vacancy chain (Güell, 2018).

The importance of *transnationalism* is prominent. Garrido and Checa Olmos (2006) conclude that an important part of the opportunity structure is based on transnationalism. The same conclusion is reached for the Chinese community where it acts as a buffer against the effects of the crisis by expanding businesses in other countries or relying on transnational resources (Beltrán Antolín & Saíz López, 2015). Transnationalism contributes to the incorporation of the women in the family business. The transnational family provides support to the burdens linked to reproductive functions in the family with the active involvement of the extended family in child care to create time for women to support the family income in the host country (González-González et al. 2011; Gutierrez Sastre, 2014). Other main contributing factors to the development of transnational businesses are the cultural nearness and the economic conditions in the host and origin country together with

the motivations for becoming entrepreneur (Baltar & Icart, 2013b). The crisis and the globalisation have also strengthened transnational links.

Migrant economy has many different layers. The research done in Spain reflects its complexity by not only looking into it from the perspective of classic theoretical approaches and from the transnational dimension but also digging further into the *gender* component. Research on gender migrant entrepreneurship in Spain has been paired to other areas such as family, class position and rurality.

A substantial number of papers included in this review analyse the role of women either as entrepreneurs or as part of the family business. Special attention is paid to the motivating factors of women to become self-employed. It is a reaction to the double discrimination, for being immigrant and women, and an option to gain independence, recognition and to balance professional and family life (González-González et al., 2011; Sáiz, 2010) The motivations and the entrepreneurial strategies are very different and based on family situation and migration background (Oso & Villares, 2005). These two variables determine the type of businesses and patterns of usage of ethnic and social networks. The motivations have been the object of considerable research (Gutierrez Sastre, 2014; Sáiz, 2010; Solé et al., 2009). Motivations can be understood in many different ways: as a strategy to overcome disadvantages and find the means of advancement; as an answer to the opportunity structure, as a family continuity strategy is in the case of the Chinese community, and as a result of the combination of the class resources and entrepreneurial culture like partially some Venezuelan, Argentinian and Chinese communities. Martínez Pérez (2009) observes the triple dimension that the family has in the business as support in start-up and succession phases, cushioning in times of crisis and fostering women involvement as a safe area of flexibility to balance work and family life

*Class position* is also considered as part of the immigrant entrepreneurship. It has been studied among Latin American women as a defining factor for motivations and perceptions of entrepreneurship and family engagement in the business (Villares-Varela, 2016; 2018). In her conclusions two distinctive groups emerge: middle class and lower class. For the first group being an entrepreneur is a mean to promote the spouse's professional career and the offspring's education in an attempt to restore the lost social position of the family unit. For the second it is the materialisation of upward social mobility

after a track of precarious jobs. All the family is involved in the business; while education is considered important for children, they are expected to contribute as well.

Sánchez-Flores et al. (2014) combine gender and *rural* entrepreneurship and emphasise the motivations. Women look for a conducive vital context beyond the professional side that allows a better harmonisation of family and personal sides. This shift to rural entrepreneurship also responds to a strategy of abandoning marginal positions and to gain more social recognition. To live and start a business in a rural area is seen as a life project towards personal realisation. However, Mancilla et al. (2010) argue that rural immigrant entrepreneurship is more positive for men than women but that overall the rural factor does not have any influence in the immigrant entrepreneurship tendency.

- *Other approaches in migrant economy research*

Some scholars challenge with more innovative views that fall into the category of *other theoretical framework*. Among those are Aboussi and García-Quero, (2012) and partially Baltar and Icart (2013b) who look into ethnic entrepreneurship in Andalusia from the institutional perspective based on Douglass North<sup>3</sup>. The authors conclude that the formal subsystem provides low opportunities and confine them to low innovative sectors, but the informal subsystems provide a certain relief to this situation together with self-exploitation, diversification and flexibility as adopted survival strategies. Riesco-Sanz (2008; 2013) is part of this category for his questioning of the appropriateness of the concept of ethnic economy. In Spain the drive to decide on self-employment is the existing institutional regime, labour market and existing opportunities and not mainly the ethnic strategies and ethnic solidarity, especially for non-EU immigrants. Moreover Riesco-Sanz (2008) questions the adequacy of the concept of ethnic economies since immigrant self-employment is framed by the economic environment and therefore it cannot be separated and considered specific to this group. Most of the strategies and dimensions argued as defining factors of the ethnic economies are actually shared by the indigenous self-employed.

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<sup>3</sup> North considers the institution as the set of rules that conform the incentives to make decisions. This includes a formal (economic conditions, regulatory and policies and public and private programs) and an informal (social, cultural and human capital) subsystems.



Street vending as part of the migrant economy has also been addressed by L'Hote and Gasta (2007). The authors made an analysis of the structure of the street entrepreneurship, a highly organised structure to mitigate the risks attached to informality. Street sellers are entrepreneurs motivated by necessity.

Finally, there is a group of papers of miscellaneous nature. Those fall under the category of *others* in this review. Some address the typology of immigrant businesses (Cavalcanti, 2009), others review literature on migrant entrepreneurship in Spain (Arjona Garrido & Checa Olmos, 2006; 2009) and one provides a descriptive analysis of statistical data on the entrepreneurial activity of immigrants in Spain (Martínez, 2008).

## **5. Conclusions and further lines of investigation**

Spain as an immigrant receiving destination is relatively new compared to other nearby countries. This explains the recent emergence of immigration research in general and of migrant economy in particular. However, the work available provides a rich span of theories and transversal topics reflecting the complexity of the theme.

The research highlights the different types of migrant-origin businesses in Spain. This reflects the impact of different theories in the status of migrant businesses and the flexibility of interpretation. Categorisation has been done based on motivations with a distinction between necessity and opportunity. The findings show that both motivations coexist. Some ethnic minority groups are more prone to opportunity due to higher social, class and human resources. However, there is a large part that responds to necessity.

Categories also are based on the type of market they serve distinguishing between open market and ethnic market. In Spain they are mostly oriented to the open market and this includes businesses initially serving the ethnic market such as halal butcheries. In this case the adoption of survival strategies has pushed them more into convenience stores serving the neighbourhood. The access to property through vacancy chain also explains the skew towards open market.

Gender has an important share of research work showing that motivations are diverse. The social status plays a relevant role for women entrepreneurs as a catalyst for the family social advancement. But for another group seeking personal satisfaction and

independence together with flexibility to combine professional and family lives are the other main decisive factors.

In Spain, research also proved the transnationality of ethnic minority businesses linked to specific groups as well as to level of education. The transnational family is a pillar that enables the business to progress while fostering the family growth. This is reflected in the patterns of role distribution. Parents work in the business and family remaining at origin looks after the children. Links with the home country facilitate the creation of transnational businesses and its diversification. The crisis has also intensified the transnational links as a strategy to survive.

The migrant economy has been analysed through the lenses of the main theories, mostly the mixed embeddedness and interactive approaches. In most cases results show that findings are a more complex reality not fully fitting into such theoretical frameworks and that in general there is a certain overlapping or a new model arising.

Finally, the crisis has brought changes to immigrant businesses and its vulnerability with higher turnover. But it also has brought opportunities, innovation, new niches, transnational focus, and certain ease in access to property.

Finally, there are several suggestions for further research that would bring deeper insights into the migrant economy in Spain to complement the work already done:

- Most of the papers included in this review do cover a limited outreach, a city or a province. Although it provides a good understanding of migrant entrepreneurs in particular areas it also misses the opportunity to exploit consolidated databases as secondary sources to take a more comprehensive geographic approach to obtain a reliable general profile of migrant economy at the national level.
- The majority of the research is static. This screenshot provides valuable information on characteristics and features of the ethnic businesses and their owners. But, focusing on wider time span could provide good insights on the development and progress of such businesses.
- In line with the research produced in Europe, it is time to upscale the depth of work by paying more attention to the interaction of social, economic and institutional processes for enhanced understanding of mixed embeddedness of Ram et al. (2017), taking into account the impact of racism, regulatory framework and other external context factors.

A more prominent role for social agency in the potential break out as well as “patch-working” as resilience strategies as has been initiated by Villares-Varela et al. (2018) would be desirable.

- Following the observations of Jones and Ram (2007), there is an absence of comparative analysis between the so called EMB (Ethnic minority businesses) and those from the majority or indigenous population. This opens the door to explore whether in Spain it is possible to talk of what the authors call the “fallacy of ethnic exceptionalism”.
- Lastly, although may be early in Spain, research on the second-generation path could shed some light into whether motivations are linked to cultural and ethnic factors or it is just a residual option in view of the labour market structure limitations.

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**Annex 1. Papers included in the systematic review**

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Framework</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Target</b>
Aboussi, M. & García-Quero, F. (2012).	Andalusia	Institutional theory	Mixed	Non-EU immigrants
Arjona Garrido, A. & Checa Olmos, J. C. (2005)	Andalusia (Almeria)	Culturalist	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Arjona Garrido, A. & Checa Olmos, J. (2006).	Andalusia (Almeria)	Interactive	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Arjona, A. & Checa, J. C. (2007).	Andalusia (Almeria)	Economic ethnic enclaves	Qualitative	General
Arjona, A. & Checa, J. C. (2009).	National	Review of literature	Review	N/A
Baltar, F. & Brunet Icart, I. (2013a).	Catalonia	Interactive mixed embeddedness Transnationalism	Qualitative	Latin Americans (Argentini- ans)
Baltar, F. & Brunet Icart, I. (2013b).	National	Transnationalism Institutional theory	Quantitative (descriptive and path analysis technique)	Latin Americans (Argentini- ans)
Beltrán Antolín, J. & Sáiz López, A. (2015).	National	Crisis Transnationalism Economic niches	Quantitative	Asians (Chinese)
Carbonell, J. et al. (2014).	Valencia	Culturalist	Quantitative	General
Cavalcanti, L. (2009).	Catalonia (Barcelona) Madrid Valencia	Ecological succession	Mixed	Non-EU immigrants

Reference	Setting	Framework	Methodology	Target
Cebrián de Miguel, J. & Bodega Fernández M. (2002).	Madrid	Culturalist - Middleman Ecological succession Ethnic enclave	Mixed	Non-EU immigrants
Cebrián, J. A.; et al (2016).	Madrid	Crisis impact	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Dinu, V. et al (2015).	Andalusia	Culturalist	Quantitative	EU (Romanians)
García Ballesteros; A. & Jiménez Blasco, B. C. (2012).	Madrid	Ecological succession Culturalist Middleman	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
González-González, J. M. et al (2011).	National	Gender Transnationalism	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Güell, B. (2016)	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Mixed embeddedness	Mixed	Asians (Pakistan)
Güell, B. (2018).	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Crisis Mixed embeddedness	Mixed	Asians (Pakistan)
Gutierrez Sastre, M. (2014).	National (5 regions)	Gender Transnationalism	Qualitative	Asians (Chinese)
Iglesias, M. B. (1998).	Madrid	Ecological succession	Qualitative	Non-EU
L'Hote, L. & Gasta, C. (2007).	Alicante	Entrepreneurship studies	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Mancilla, C. et al (2010).	National	Rural	Quantitative	General
Martínez, A. C. (2008)	National	Descriptive analysis	Quantitative	General
Martínez Pérez, P. (2009)	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Gender and Family	Qualitative	N/A
Muñoz Bullón, F. (2014).	National	Crisis impact	Quantitative	General

Reference	Setting	Framework	Methodology	Target
Oso, L. & Villares, M. (2005).	Galicia Madrid	Gender	Qualitative	Latin Americans
Pardo, P. & Varela, M. (2009).	Galicia (A Coruña)	Mixed embeddedness	Mixed	General
Parella, S. (2005).	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Mixed embeddedness	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Serra del Pozo, P. (2006).	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Ethnic enclaves Mixed embeddedness	Mixed	General
Riesco-Sanz, A. (2013).	National	Ethnic Economy concep- tual	Quantitative	N/A
Riesco Sanz, A. (2008).	Madrid	Theoretical framework	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Rueda Armengot, C. et al. (2010).	Valencia	Culturalist	Quantitative	General (Eastern Europeans of EU and non-EU immigrants)
Sáiz, A. (2010).	National	Gender	Qualitative	Asians
Sánchez-Flores, S. et al. (2014)	Valencia	Gender Rural	Qualitative	General
Solé, C. & Parella, S. (2009)	Madrid Barcelona Valencia	Mixed embeddedness	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Solé, C., Parella, S. & Alarcón, A. (2009).	Catalonia (Barcelona) Madrid	Gender	Qualitative	Non-EU immigrants
Valenzuela-García, H. (2010).	Catalonia (Barcelona)	Interactive	Qualitative	Asians (Pakistan)
Valenzuela, H. et al. (2017).	Catalonia	Crisis Ethnic enclaves	Mixed	Asians (Pakistan and India)

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Framework</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Target</b>
Villares-Varela, M. (2017)	N/A	Family	Qualitative	Latin American
Villares-Varela, M. (2018).	Galicia	Gender	Qualitative	Latin American

